

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 OMB-01
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R 271129Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4841
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

S E C R E T TRIPOLI 1366

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, LY, SU, TS, PLO
SUBJ: CURRENT LIBYAN SCENE: QADHAFI MANEUVERS OUT OF ISOLATION

SUMMARY. QADHAFI HAS BEEN MANEUVERING VIGOROUSLY AND WITH
SOME SUCCESS DURING PAST SEVERAL MONTHS TO END LIBYA'S
ISOLATION IN ARAB WORLD AND MOVE BACK INTO MAINSTREAM
OF EVENTS. MAJOR FEATURES OF TREND INCLUDE IMPROVEMENT
OF RELATIONS WITH EGYPT, SUDAN, TUNISIA AND GREATER
INTEREST IN MAGHREB COUNTRIES. END SUMMARY.

1. LAST FEW MONTHS HAVE SEEN AN UPBEAT QADHAFI MOVING
WITH SKILL AND EFFECTIVENESS TO TAKE LIBYA OUT OF ITS
POSITION OF ISOLATION IN THE ARAB WORLD AND PROJECT LIBYAN
INFLUENCE MORE DIRECTLY INTO EVENTS OF THE REGION. MAJOR
ELEMENT IN CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT, IF PERHAPS

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TRANSITORY, IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH EGYPT SINCE
ARMED FORCES OF TWO COUNTRIES CLASHED IN JULY BORDER
WAR. CLASH HAD BEEN PRECEDED AND FOLLOWED FOR SOME
PERIOD BY BITTER ANTI-SADAT MEDIA CAMPAIGN, ATTACK
HAS BEEN DIMINISHING AND HAS NOW CEASED WITH REDUCTION
OF BORDER TENSIONS AND EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS. SINCE
END OF CLASH, QADHAFI CONTINUED TO SEND SIGNALS TO

SADAT THROUGH VARIOUS THIRD PARTIES OFTEN INCLUDING PLO LEADER YASIR ARAFAT. SADAT'S MOST PROMINENT RESPONSE OCCURRED SOME THREE WEEKS AGO WHEN HE DISPATCHED EGYPTIAN MEDICAL TEAM TO TREAT ONE OF QADHAFI'S AILING SONS.

2. IN PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS QADHAFI HAS CONTINUED TO DEPLORE STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES AND IN OCTOBER 7 SPEECH DRAMATICALLY OFFERED TO PLACE LIBYAN ARMED FORCES AT DISPOSAL OF EGYPT FOR BATTLE AGAINST ZIONISM. DURING SAME PERIOD TWO COUNTRIES AGREED TO REOPEN RESPECTIVE CONSULATES IN ALEXANDRIA AND BENGHAZI, RESUME AIR TRAFFIC AND REVIVE CONFEDERATION CONTACTS. OFFER OF LIBYAN ARMED FORCES FOR EGYPT, THOUGH NOT NEW, HAS NOT BEEN MADE FOR SOME TIME. OF EQUAL INTEREST ARE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF QADHAFI'S WILLINGNESS TO TRANSFER BADLY NEEDED ARMS DIRECTLY TO THE EGYPTIAN FORCES.

3. DURING SAME PERIOD THAW IN RELATIONS WITH SUDAN APPARENTLY OCCURRING. MEDIATION EFFORTS OF SADIQ AL-MAHDI AND AL-HINDI AT QADHAFI'S INITIATIVE MAY BE LEADING TO RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WITH SUDAN.

4. ON THE TUNISIAN FRONT INTENSITY OF FAVORABLE TREND OF RELATIONS CONTINUES UNABATED. CONTINUOUS
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EXCHANGES OF DELEGATIONS GO FORWARD CAPPED RECENTLY BY VISIT OF MADAME BOURGUIBA.

5. EVIDENCE OF QADHAFI'S RECENTLY ANNOUNCED INTENTION SEVERAL MONTHS AGO OF PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO MAGHREB IS LESS CLEAR. NEVERTHELESS, HE IS APPARENTLY SEEKING TO INSERT HIMSELF IN SAHARA DISPUTE. ACCORDING TO MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR HERE, MOROCCANS ARE WILLING TO LISTEN.

6. ALSO QADHAFI HAS IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH PLO. YASIR ARAFAT'S FREQUENT VISITS HERE APPARENTLY WERE ALSO CONNECTED WITH RESUMPTION OF LIBYAN SUBSIDIES TO FATAH WHICH HAD BEEN IN ABEYANCE FOR SEVERAL YEARS.

7. WHILE CHANGING TIDES IN ARAB WORLD ARE CERTAINLY NOT NEW, IT DOES APPEAR THAT QADHAFI IS MOVING WITH SURENESS AND SKILL TO PLACE LIBYA IN A MORE INFLUENTIAL REGIONAL POSITION. PRESUMABLY HE DESIRES APPEAR TO BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT WHEN AND IF ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE MATERIALIZES IN TUNIS NEXT MONTH. HE NO DOUBT ALSO WISHES POSITION HIMSELF FOR LARGER

LIBYAN ROLE IF MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS FLOUNDER
AS HE BELIEVES THEY WILL. ALSO, IT SEEMS POSSIBLE
THAT FRIENDS OF U.S. IN REGION WHO HAD EARLIER
ADVOCATED STERNNESS TOWARD LIBYA MAY NOW DESIRE
HEDGE THEIR BETS.
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